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American Honda Reveals Moto2 Machine

At Laguna GP

This year's USGP at Laguna Seca gave American road racing fans a live glimpse of the new Moto2 class as American Honda unveiled the machine it will enter in the Red Bull Indianapolis GP. Moto2 replaces the long-running 250cc world championship, and it features machines comprised of prototype chassis and powerplants derived from Honda's SuperSport-spec CBR600RR, a machine that has shown itself to be one of the most powerful and popular inline 600s in history.

Designed as a stepping stone for the MotoGP class and other premier classes, Moto2 is the first time in Grand Prix world championship racing that a single manufacturer has supplied engines for an entire class. While Moto2 racing did not take place at Laguna Seca (it will instead run at the Red Bull Indianapolis GP at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on August 29), American Honda offered fans a close-up glimpse of what the class is all about when it revealed its Moto2 team at the Laguna GP.

American Honda was awarded a wild card entry for the Moto2 class at Indy, and as a result the company put together a team that includes Moriwaki Engineering, Kevin Schwantz as team manager, Kevin Erion as crew chief, Roger Lee Hayden as the rider and a host of sponsors.

"American Honda views the Indy GP as an opportunity to support Moto2 in the U.S.," said Ray Blank, Senior Vice President, Motorcycle Division. "We are very excited to be road racing again in America. This great new production-based world championship format is based on the Honda CBR600RR engine platform, so it's a natural for our participation."

The team machine is a Honda-powered Moriwaki MD600. Moriwaki has been at the forefront of professional racing for 34 years, specializing in Honda-related products. Best known for its Honda V5-powered MD211VF MotoGP bike, which campaigned in 2004, the firm—in conjunction with American Honda—more recently released the MD250H, a 250cc four-stroke single-cylinder lightweight racer to support youth road racing in America. In Moto2, Moriwaki has already proven its engineering prowess, winning three rounds with its MD600 in the hands of Gresini Racing's Toni Elias. As a result, Elias currently leads the Moto2 championship, Thomas Luthi of Interwetten Moriwaki is second, and Moriwaki leads the constructor championship standings.





"Once Moriwaki was in place, pieces of the puzzle started coming together," said Blank. GEICO Powersports and the Ride for Kids got on board with the team. After all, the average MotoGP weekend has a total audience of about 100,000-plus on the ground and broadcast impressions of over 300 million.

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"We needed a savvy team captain, and they don't come any smarter than Kevin Schwantz," said Blank. "We contacted him to see if he would be interested, and he liked the project."

Schwantz, the 1993 500cc Grand Prix World Champion, currently runs the Schwantz School, where riders can learn from him aboard Honda CBR600RR machines. "It's an honor for me to be chosen as team manager," said Schwantz. With 25 Grand Prix wins during his career, Schwantz is the second most successful American road racer behind Eddie Lawson, and his do-or-die riding style endeared him to fans like few racers in history. In a rare display of respect, the FIM retired Schwantz's racing number 34 as a testament to his popularity. For the first time since his retirement in 1995, Schwantz's famous number 34 is again part of Grand Prix competition on Hayden's Moto2 Moriwaki MD600.

Hayden's participation in the effort reunites the popular rider with American Honda and Erion Racing—American Honda's premier support team for more than 15 years. Roger and his brothers Nicky and Tommy are American racing royalty, and the Indy GP will give American fans another opportunity to see him racing a Honda 600 on American soil. At 27, Hayden also qualifies to race as a wild card entry: Moto2 rules require all wild card riders to be 28 years old or younger. "The Moto2 class is really competitive, and I'm looking forward to jumping in the middle of it," said Hayden, who is currently competing in the World Superbike Championship. He also replaced the injured Randy de Puniet on the LCR Honda RC212V at the Laguna MotoGP event.

To capture the uniqueness of the effort, American Honda engaged world-renown artist Aldo Drudi, founder of Drudi Performance, to create a special livery for the bike and team gear. Drudi designs many of the MotoGP machine graphics, and





he also designed the graphics for the 2010 Gresini Moto2 team. Interestingly, Schwantz was the first GP rider wearing a Drudi-designed helmet to win a World Championship.

The effort also is designed to benefit the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTf) Ride for Kids (RFK) program and its efforts to fight childhood brain tumors. Since 1991, the Honda Riders Club of America® (HRCa®) has been the presenting sponsor of the RFK. Drudi-designed replica team T-shirts and hats went on sale prior to the Laguna GP to jump-start this fundraising process (go to rideforkids.org today to make a donation and receive your collector apparel), and at Indy the apparel will be available on-site. There will also be a photo opportunity for fans to have their portrait taken with the team bike, with the proceeds to benefit the PBTf.



In addition, Schwantz will lead a Lap of Champions at Indy, a parade lap around the GP circuit limited to only 300 motorcycles; proceeds from this event will also go to the PBTf. To sign up for the Indy Lap of Champions, go to rideforkids.org. And perhaps most exciting of all, a set of autographed leathers from the American Honda Moto2 effort will be auctioned off following the Indy GP, with the proceeds to be donated to the PBTf.

As great as it is to see American Honda back in road racing competition on American soil, it's even more inspiring to see such an effort benefiting as great a cause as the Ride for Kids.



● For more images of the Honda-powered Moriwaki MD600 Moto2 bike and



(Left to right) American Honda Press Department Manager Bill Savino chats up the incredible Moto2 bike with Kevin Schwantz, Roger Hayden and Kevin Erion.



the press reveal at the Laguna GP, go to hrca.honda.com/Articles/Article.aspx?xml=Articles/Segment/Segment_Article_50452.xml

Young Lions Square Off On Moriwaki **MD250H**



At the 2010 Red Bull Indianapolis GP, a host of young racers will take to the world-famous circuit on Moriwaki MD250Hs powered by Honda. This special event has been added to the United States Grand Prix Racers Union (USGPRU) schedule and allows up-and-coming road racers aged 12-16 to enjoy an unforgettable racing experience at a world-class event.

Like the Moto2-class machines, which use a spec-built Honda engine based on the CBR600RR powerplant, the Moriwaki MD250H also incorporates a Honda-built engine—a single-cylinder four-stroke sourced from the CRF250X. In addition to convenient electric starting, this 249cc mill offers an excellent blend of performance and durability—just the

ticket for keeping costs under control while fielding a genuine race bike.

The purpose-built aluminum-framed MD250H also features massive main frame spars, a single radial-mount front disc brake, inverted fork, Pro-Link® single-shock rear suspension, racing wheels and tires, plus a works-style welded aluminum fuel tank.

Watch the young lions at Indy battle for glory and a share of the \$180,000 in contingency awards Honda put up for grabs this season to encourage racing at the grass-roots level.

For more details about MD250H-class racing and the USGPRU go to usgpru.net.

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